PIAZZA DI SPAGNA

Piazza di spagna is a wonderful and beautiful relic that has been the center of attention for foreigners since very long; and is still one of the most spectacular plazas in Rome.

Taking as definition for plaza a large space suited to recreation, piazza di spagna is very well designed to plies every aspect of the human being but; before mentioning the advantages of this historical place, we must first learn how it was created.

FOUNDATION

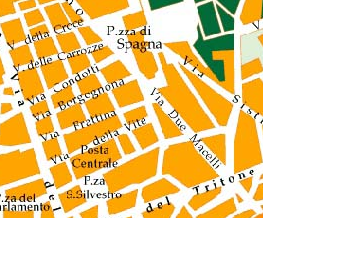
The story of the piazza tells of the time of Louis XIV of France, and his advisor Cardinal Mazarin, who proposed a plan to build a ***monumental staircase*** (Scalinata della Trinita' dei Monti, or Spanish Steps as known in English) up to the [*church of Trinita' de' Monti*](http://www.romainteractive.com/bits/bit02/trinita.html) (inside [*Daniele*](http://www.romainteractive.com/bits/bit02/chiesa_trinita.html)[***da Volterra***](http://www.romainteractive.com/bits/bit02/chiesa_trinita.html)’s masterpieces), which featured an equestrian statue of the French king. The plan was obviously not popular with the papacy and it was shelved for a hundred years until finally built without the statue.



DESIGN OF THE PIAZZA

From an urban planner’s view the piazza does not stick to trends in its structural shape; it is formed from two sharp triangles that meet at the points, the piazza is formed by such a strange shape that it's hard to call it a "square". In fact a few centuries ago only the southern half was called Piazza di Spagna (after the [*Spanish embassy*](http://www.romainteractive.com/bits/bit02/ambasciata.html)), the northern half was called Piazza di Francia (after the French embassy).

In terms of efficiency the piazza is designed to be the center of attention not only for tourists but the residents of the area as well; for example the Spanish stairs are used mainly to sit and to enjoy the beauty of the area, there are painters that sit around in Via Margutta to portrait the people passing by, the streets are very well proportioned for vehicle and people, it is a perfect place for recreation that is the main objective of the urban design of plazas. The piazza is home to numerous high class hotels, stores and of beautiful structures that displays those elements consistently employed by Francesco Borromini to maintain fluidity of his buildings: where one is used to straight walls he uses gentle curves to break the line, windows of varying shapes, pilasters to break up the length. This is a narrow street and walking along it will bring out the beauty of Borromini’s work.



The piazza is very well known as written before for its marvelous planning, and its numerous breath taking monuments, such as:

[*Fontana della Barcaccia*](http://www.romainteractive.com/bits/bit02/barcaccia.html)

This intriguing fountain sits not far from the bottom of the steps that always has people around it puzzling over its peculiarities. This is [*Fontana della Barcaccia*](http://www.romainteractive.com/bits/bit02/barcaccia.html) which is set very low, almost at street level, in order to function with the low water pressure that arrives there. But why a fountain in the shape of a small boat? In 1588 Rome suffered one of its not infrequent inundations when the *Tevere* can no longer hold all the water that washes down the river. It was devastating and many people lost their homes. When the waters subsided there was left a small flat-bottomed boat in the mud (which had been used to rescue people and move possessions), a symbol of the efforts to survive the floods. It was this that inspired Pietro Bernini, and his son Gian Lorenzo, to construct this wonderful fountain.



In the southern part of the piazza there is a **column** that was erected in 1856 to commemorate the Catholic dogma of the Immaculate Conception proclaimed by Pius IX. The column, found under a monastery in 1777, is topped by a statue of the Virgin Mary, and rests on a base that features statues of the prophets Moses, David, Isaiah and Ezekiel. The pope comes here every year on December 8th to celebrate the Immaculate Conception.



CONCLUSION

Piazza di spagna is a gift of the old age to remind us that there are still beautiful things in this world man can create but it is up to the new generation to discover.